

What is Technical Harassment

In our complex technical environment there are many opportunities for a competent technical individual to be the subject of technical harassment. Sometimes it can be so subtle that you may not even be aware you are being harassed. Worse yet, you may inadvertently technically harass another person by accident.

Following are some guidelines to help you determine if you are being technically harassed.

If you are repeatedly asked the same technical question you may be the victim of technical harassment. While it is most common to be asked the question repeatedly within the same conversation, some instances have been identified of habitual technical harassment. Habitual technical harassment is not uncommon and has been known to exhibit group tendencies where members of a group may ask the same question repeatedly. Untreated, these instances of group technical harassment can continue for years.

If you are asked a technical question by a non-technical person and they do not write your answer down it is likely the question is frivolous. Most non-technical people are not capable of remembering a true technical answer for more than 30 seconds.

If you are forced into a discussion where a person uses more than three (3) buzzwords in one sentence the person is most likely a fake and you are the unwitting victim of technical harassment. One note of caution, competent technical people have been known to inadvertently use buzzwords after reading mindless drivel like PC Week or LAN Times. If the person has been known to use more common technical terms in the past such as "stuff" and "things", they are most likely victim of computer magazine brainwashing.

If during a troubleshooting session a person uses the term "trick". For example "maybe we could trick the database into thinking it has been updated" This is a sure sign of technical harassment.

If a person explains that a needed feature will be provided by a vendor and that person is nontechnical then you are at risk of being technically harassed. If you believe that person, you have definitely been technically harassed, if you don't believe them you have only been technically annoyed.

If when trying to resolve a technical problem with a product from a vendor and you are instructed to call the salesman that sold us the product you are being set up for technical harassment. It is a common reaction for a non-technical person when they have purchased technical equipment to call another non-technical person. The dialogue between two nontechnical people usually provides some sense of comfort that they aren't the only ones who are confused.